

# ROMANIZATION SYSTEM FOR HEBREW

## BGN/PCGN 1962 AGREEMENT

This system, adopted jointly by the BGN and the PCGN in 1962, is based on the Hebrew Academy System as used by the Survey of Israel over a period of many years and as published in *Transliteration of Geographical Names in the Topographic Maps of Israel* (Cartographic Papers No. 4), Survey of Israel, Tel Aviv, 1969.

The first two tables and notes 1 through 5 provide for the romanization of Hebrew names, and notes 6 and 7 provide for the romanization of non-Hebrew names of two types: commemorative names – most commonly of European origin – and Arabic names written in Hebrew script.

### CONSONANT CHARACTERS

	Hebrew	Romanization	Remarks
1.	א	'	<i>See note 1</i>
2.	ב	b	<i>See note 2</i>
3.	ב	v	
4.	ג ג	g	<i>See note 2</i>
5.	ד ד	d	<i>See note 2</i>
6.	ה	h	Not romanized in word-final position unless written with a dot ( <i>mappiq</i> ), i.e., ה.
7.	ו	w	
8.	ז	z	
9.	ח	<u>h</u>	
10.	ט	t	
11.	י	y	
12.	כ ך (final)	k	
13.	כ ך or ך (final)	kh	
14.	ל	l	
15.	מ ם (final)	m	
16.	נ ן (final)	n	
17.	ס	s	
18.	ע	'	
19.	פ	p	<i>See note 2</i>
20.	פ ף (final)	f	
21.	צ ץ (final)	<u>z</u>	
22.	ק	q	
23.	ר	r	

	Hebrew	Romanization	Remarks
24.	שׁ	sh	
25.	ס	s	
26.	ת	t	<i>See note 2</i>
27.	ג	(ğ)	These three Hebrew characters and certain other modified characters not included in this system are used on Israeli maps to render Arabic and other non-Hebrew names. Names in which these characters occur should be romanized in accordance with notes 6 and 7
28.	ז	(ž)	
29.	צ	(č)	

## VOWEL CHARACTERS

	Hebrew	Romanization	Remarks
1.	אִ	a	
2.	אֵ	a	
3.	אֹ	a, o	<i>Usually a; very rarely o.</i>
4.	אֵי	e	
5.	אֵי	e	
6.	אֵי	é	<i>When stressed.</i>
7.	אֵי	e	
8.	אֵי	e, or not romanized	<i>See note 3</i>
9.	אִי	i	
10.	אֵי	i	
11.	אֵי	o	
12.	אֵי	o	
13.	אֵי	o	
14.	אֵי	u	
15.	אֵי	u	

## NOTES

1. Every medial *alef* (א) bearing a vowel character or *shewa* (:) should be romanized; e.g., גִּלְאֹן → **Gal'on**, בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע → **Be'er Sheva**, נֶאֱדָר → **Ne'dar**. *Alef* should not be romanized when initial or when used as mater lectionis; e.g., אֵלָה → **Ela**, סָאָא → **Sasa**.
2. The dot placed within the body of the consonant characters ב, ג, ד, כ, פ, and ת, when they occur at the beginning of a name or after an unvoweled consonant character in the middle of a name, is known as the “weak” *dagesh*. The addition of the dot forms the consonant characters בּ, גּ, and פּ. The phonetic distinction between ג and גּ, ד and דּ, and ת and תּ has now been lost and these pairs of characters should be romanized identically.

The same dot may also be placed within the body of any consonant character (including the six mentioned above but excluding א, ה, ו, ע, and ר) to indicate the “strong” *dagesh*. This is rendered in romanization by doubling the letter; the digraph sh is not doubled. The “strong” *dagesh* can be distinguished from the “weak” *dagesh*, since the former is always preceded by a vowel character; e.g., אֶכּוֹ → **'Akko** but פֶּרְכּוֹ → **Karkom**. See note 4.

3. If the vowel character ְ represents *shewa nah* ( “quiescent” *shewa*), it marks the end of a closed syllable and should not be romanized. If it represents *shewa na'*, which is a short neutral vowel, it should be romanized by **e**.
4. The definite article ה should be capitalized in romanization and written together with the following word. If the initial Hebrew character of the following word bears the *dagesh*, the corresponding Roman letter should also be capitalized but not doubled; e.g., **HaYogev**. If the initial character is ע (‘ayin), the Roman-script equivalent of the following Hebrew vowel character should be capitalized; e.g., **Ha'Ogen**. If a name is printed in all uppercase letters, a hyphen should be inserted between the definite article and the following word.
5. “Furtive” *patah* ( ֿ ), which is written under final *he mappiq* (הּ), het (ח), and ‘ayin (ע) but pronounced before and not after those three consonant characters, should be romanized before the character under which it is written in Hebrew script; רוֹקֵחַ → **Roqeah**.
6. The non-Hebrew elements of commemorative names derived from Roman-alphabet languages should be spelled as in the original; e.g., **Kefar Masaryk** (not **Masariq**), **Balfouriyya** (not **Balfuriyya**), **Kefar Szold** (not **Sold**).
7. Arabic names written in the Hebrew alphabet should be romanized according to the following special rules:
  - a. Hebrew consonant characters should be romanized according to the table above with the following amendments and additions:

1.	א	not romanized
2.	ג	j
3.	ד	dh
4.	ד	ḏ
5.	ח	ḥ
6.	הּ הֹ הֶ (final)	-a

7.	ז	dh
8.	ח	kh
9.	ט	ṭ
10.	ע	gh
11.	צ	ṣ
12.	ת	th

b. Hebrew vowel characters should be romanized as follows:

1.	◌ְ	not romanized
2.	◌ֶ	a (ā before word-final א)
3.	◌ִ	i
4.	◌ֹ	u
5.	◌ֻ	ā
6.	◌ֵ	ī

7.	◌ֹּ	ū See note (c).
8.	◌ֵּ	ei
9.	◌ִּ	aiy
10.	◌ֹּ	īy
11.	◌ֻּ	au

- c. Except for בּ and ב, a consonant character containing a dot should be romanized by doubling the equivalent letter or digraph. The character ף should be romanized **ū**, unless a vowel character is shown beneath it, in which case it should be romanized **ww**; e.g., חַוְוָרָה → **Huwwāra**.
- d. An unassimilated Arabic article is written אֵל or אֶל and should be romanized **el**, not **al**. An assimilated Arabic article is written אֶל־ or אֵל־ followed by a dotted consonant character, which should be romanized by writing the equivalent letter or digraph once as part of the article and once again as part of the following word; e.g., עֵין אֶל־סַהֵלָה → **‘Ein es Sahla**.
- e. The character sequences דה, כה, סה, and תה, may be romanized **d·h**, **k·h**, **s·h** and **t·h** in order to differentiate those romanizations from the digraphs **dh**, **kh**, **sh**, and **th**, which are used to render the characters ד', ז', ח', ש', and ת'.